

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 3473

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, BG

SUBJECT: A VISIT FOR MUJIB

1. I THINK THE TIME HAS COME FOR ALL OF US TO GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO--AND I HOPE ACT ON--THE LONG-STANDING PROPOSAL TO EXTEND AN INVITATION TO THE UNITED STATES TO PRIME MINISTER MUJIBUR RAHMAN. THIS MATTER HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF NUMEROUS COMMUNICATIONS OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS, AND IN MY VIEW THE CASE FOR EXTENDING AN INVITATION FOR AN OFFICIAL VISIT IS NOW MORE PERSUASIVE THAN EVER.

2. AT THE PRESENT OUR RELATIONS WITH BANGLADESH ARE GOOD. OUR GENEROSITY SINCE 1971 HAS DONE MUCH TO BLUNT THE ILL-FEELING OCCASIONED BY THE ALLEGED "TILT," BUT NEVERTHELESS THE BENGALLEES' MEMORY OF OUR POSITION CAN TOO READILY BE REFRESHED. AS AN EARNEST OF OUR INTEREST IN BANGLADESH, PARTICULARLY IN A PERIOD WHEN OUR ABILITY TO AID THE COUNTRY MATERIALLY IS DIMINISHED, AN INVITATION FOR AN OFFICIAL VISIT WOULD BE MOST EFFECTIVE.

3. EQUALLY IMPORTANTLY, MUJIB HAS NOW MADE VISITS TO A VARIETY OF COUNTRIES--USSR, UK, YUGOSLAVIA, JAPAN, INDIA, FOR EXAMPLE. THE FACT THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS NOT YET EXTENDED AN INVITATION INEVITABLY RAISES A QUESTION IN BENGALLEE MINDS ABOUT THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO BANGLADESH.

4. I BELIEVE THEREFORE THAT WE SHOULD NOW EXTEND AN INVITATION TO MUJIB. WE SUSPECT THAT HE WILL WANT TO ATTEND THE UNGA SESSION
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IN SEPTEMBER TO HELP MARK HIS COUNTRY'S ADMISSION TO THE UNITED

NATIONS AND THINK THIS WOULD OFFER AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY FOR THE VISIT. CERTAINLY, IF MUJIB DOES ATTEND THE UNGA AND IS NOT INVITED TO WASHINGTON, ONLY THE EXISTENCE OF MOST UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD PREVENT BENGALIS FROM CONCLUDING THAT WE WERE SNUBBING MUJIB AND BANGLADESH. I KNOW THAT WOULD NOT BE OUR INTENTION BUT WE WOULD FIND ARGUING THE POINT HERE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT.
BOSTER

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